



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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NOAA Fisheries Extends Requirement of Modified TEDs for Shrimp Trawlers in Waters from the Extreme Northern Edge of Georgia to Southern North Carolina Waters to Protect Migrating Endangered Leatherback Sea Turtles

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is extending the closure to shrimp trawling off the extreme northern edge of Georgia to southern North Carolina for at least a two week period to protect migrating leatherback sea turtles beginning at 11:59 p.m. tonight. Shrimpers whose turtle excluder devices (TEDs) are modified to have an opening large enough for leatherbacks to escape may continue to operate in the closed area. If aerial surveys indicate that leatherbacks have left the area, shrimping with nets equipped with standard TEDs may resume at 12:01 a.m., May 24.

The closed area encompasses all inshore waters and offshore waters 10 nautical miles seaward of the COLREGS demarcation line, bounded by 32° N. lat. (approximately Tybee Island, GA) and 34° N. lat. (approximately Wilmington Beach, NC) within the Leatherback Conservation Zone. Aerial surveys found high concentrations of leatherback turtles in this area, in waters where they may interact with shrimp trawlers. This action is necessary to reduce mortality of endangered leatherback sea turtles incidentally captured in shrimp trawls. Additional aerial surveys are planned to monitor the leatherbacks' migration.

To obtain considerable recorded information about our missions, services, and management measures, call our toll free public service line at 1-866-570-5301. If the information you need is not available, you can leave a message, and we will return your call. Information also is available on our homepage at <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov>.

To report violations of commercial trip limits or closures, contact our Office of Law Enforcement at 727/570-5344 or 1-800/853-1964. NOAA Fisheries, or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).